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Red Cuba Base Held 'Enormous'

Aiken Gives Estimate After Secret Briefing

Symington Cites Large Number Of Air Personnel

By GEORGE SHERMAN
 Star Staff Writer

Russia has built an "enormously strong military and political base in Cuba" during the last six months, Senator Aiken, Republican of Vermont, said today after a briefing by Secretary of State Rusk and Central Intelligence Agency Director John A. McCone.

Neither Senator Aiken nor any other participant in the

Partial Text of President Kennedy's Press Conference. Page A-5

2 1/2-hour, closed-door hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Latin American Subcommittee would discuss what they were told about Soviet forces in Cuba.

But Senator Aiken did add that the magnitude of the Russian buildup "is much stronger than I thought," and "it is continuing to grow stronger."

Senator Symington, Democrat of Missouri, who also attended the briefing, told newsmen that "what worries me" is that there apparently are more men in what he called "the Soviet air complex" in Cuba than he had understood.

Personal Opinions

Like Senator Aiken, Senator Symington declined to discuss directly what Mr. Rusk or Mr. McCone might have testified, emphasizing that he spoke "my own opinions."

Senator Symington said he figured "We ought to worry more about what is in Cuba now—considerably more than what it was a few months ago," than about what happened at the Bay of Pigs.

Senators Symington and Humphrey of Minnesota stressed the need to forget about past mistakes in Cuba and to concentrate on the real and present danger in the Caribbean.

Mentions Red Air Personnel

Senator Symington said that he had been particularly impressed with the high percentage of Soviet air personnel in Cuba.

Senator Humphrey said that the briefing had not revealed "any evidence of new strength" beyond that mentioned by President Kennedy in his press conference yesterday.

He said that both Mr. McCone and Mr. Rusk told of the arrival of one Soviet ship since the missile crisis in October, and that he presumed it carried "small arms."

He also said that Mr. McCone had discussed United States low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba and that any new military sites are being checked out carefully.

Asks Political Truce

Senator Humphrey appealed for a partisan truce in dealing with past and future Cuban policy.

"If Congress indulges itself in a wholesale inquiry of the past," he said, "very little new information will be gained, and only old sores opened, with plenty of blame going to both

Republicans and Democrats."

Speaking to reporters after the hearing, the chairman of the subcommittee, Democratic Senator Morse of Oregon, said that the briefing "had exhausted" possibilities of gathering information on the buildup.

He said that no further hearings on this subject would be scheduled.

Faith in Intelligence

Senator Morse also said that in his opinion the American people ought to have complete faith that United States intelligence is "keeping informed on what Russians or anyone else are bringing into Cuba."

He said the committee had found no evidence of fissionable materials being introduced into Cuba at this time.

He also added that the Bay of Pigs invasion by Cuban exiles in April, 1961, had been discussed at some length, although it had no direct relation to the Soviet military buildup in Cuba.

There have been estimates the Russians have as many as 17,000 troops in Cuba, some of them combat forces, plus widely varying estimates of the number of purportedly civilian "technicians" in addition to that total.

Keating Says 20,000

Senator Keating, Republican of New York, has said his information is that the combined total is 20,000.

Chairman Morse said if the time ever came when a military buildup of offensive weapons in Cuba threatened the United States or Latin America, "you can expect the United States to take what action is necessary," as the President did last October in the crisis over Russian missiles in Cuba.

Yesterday at his press conference President Kennedy gave the latest official view and statistics on continued "defensive" Soviet military activity in Cuba since the removal of offensive missiles in October.

And he emphatically supported his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, in saying that no United States air cover was planned or withdrawn from the ill-fated exile invasion of Cuba.

President Kennedy gave the outline for Mr. Rusk's testimony when he told reporters that "the best information we have is that one ship has arrived since the October crisis, which may have arms on it, possibly military cargo."

He said that "there is no evidence that this ship carried any offensive weapons," and that in this sense there has not been any military buildup.

The President went on to give the latest statistics on Soviet military personnel in Cuba. He thought that "probably about" 4,500 Soviet technicians had been withdrawn with the offensive missiles. Approximately 16,000 or 17,000 Russians still remain to operate the SAM (antiaircraft missile) sites and other technical equipment, he said.

Some organized units, previously described, are still on the territory of Cuba, Mr. Kennedy added. They are exercising and building some barracks.

U. S. Scrutiny Continues

"There is no influx of military equipment, other than the ship and, as I say, our scrutiny of Cuba is daily," the President concluded, apparently referring to continued United States high-altitude reconnaissance flights.

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